



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 6, 2004

### **H.R. 3281**

### **Federal Employee Protection of Disclosures Act**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Government Reform  
on September 29, 2004*

H.R. 3281 would amend the Whistleblower Protection Act. The bill would clarify current law and give new protections to federal employees who report abuse, fraud, and waste involving government activities. The legislation also would make a change to the laws governing the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) and require a study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) regarding the revocation of security clearances in retaliation for whistleblowing.

CBO estimates that implementing the bill would not have a significant budgetary impact. Although H.R. 3281 could increase the number of whistleblower cases, CBO expects that such an increase would be slight and that any additional administrative costs would be insignificant. In addition, the legislation would require the GAO to prepare a study by June 2005 on security clearance revocations since 1996. Based on similar reports, CBO estimates that preparing and distributing this report would cost less than \$500,000 in fiscal year 2005, assuming the availability of appropriated funds. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

H.R. 3281 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On September 3, 2004, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 2628, the Federal Employee Protection of Disclosures Act, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs on July 21, 2004. The Senate bill contains additional amendments to the laws that govern the MSPB and the Office of Special Counsel. The differences in the estimated costs reflect the differences between the two bills.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Matthew Pickford. The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.